

UC College of Law Launches Innovative Justice Tech Startup Program



LexLab, the renowned center at the University of California College of the Law in San Francisco, has recently unveiled an exciting new program to support justice tech startups. Since its establishment in 2019, LexLab has already assisted over 100 legal tech startups, and it is now set to welcome a fresh cohort of promising ventures for its Justice Tech Accelerator program starting in fall 2023.

The inaugural group for this program will be selected through a rigorous application process, with submissions accepted until July 31. LexLab's mission, as stated on its website, is to foster startups that will positively impact individuals and communities affected by the justice system and the access-to-justice gap.

The Justice Tech Accelerator is a 10-week program from September through November. It specifically addresses the unique challenges the justice tech sector faces, encompassing areas such as regulatory hurdles, product development, marketing, and fundraising. Participants of the program will have the opportunity to fine-tune their pitches, engage in weekly meetings and events, and receive invaluable mentorship. The program culminates with a highly anticipated "Demo Day," where startups can showcase their innovative work to potential investors and the wider justice tech community.

LexLab has collaborated with several esteemed organizations to bring this program to life. The Justice Technology Association, a nonprofit trade organization, is partnering with LexLab to provide their expertise. Additionally, gener8tor, a global venture company, and Village Capital, known for their extensive support of startups, are key partners in this endeavor.

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Drew Amerson, the director of LexLab, expressed great enthusiasm for the program, recognizing the pressing need to enhance the availability and quality of legal services and tools in both the criminal and civil justice systems. Amerson shared his excitement about the partnership: "We're thrilled to be partnering with these amazing organizations in welcoming justice tech startups to the UC Law SF community, giving our students an opportunity to work with entrepreneurs committed to addressing the justice gap."

Founding member of the Justice Technology Association and 2023 ABA Journal Legal Rebel, Sonja Ebron, highlighted the significant benefits her startup, Courtroom5, gained from participating in similar accelerator programs. Ebron expressed optimism that the Justice Tech Accelerator would have a comparable impact, stating, "All of those experiences were helpful for getting us where we are today. The availability of a justice tech-focused accelerator is really going to help grow the ecosystem and attract many more entrepreneurs into the space."

Maya Markovich, the executive director of the Justice Technology Association, emphasized the unique challenges justice tech companies face in navigating the complex regulatory landscape. Once the cohort is selected, the program will meticulously identify the specific issues faced by each startup, enabling them to tailor the curriculum to meet their individual needs.

Elizabeth Nguyen, the economic opportunity practice lead at Village Capital, acknowledged the urgent requirement for support among justice tech founders to enhance access to justice in both civil and criminal systems. Nguyen emphasized that the primary goal of their collective efforts is to empower founders and the communities they serve.

LexLab's Justice Tech Accelerator program promises to be an exceptional platform for budding justice tech startups. With the combined expertise of its partners and the dedication of LexLab, this program has the potential to revolutionize the legal industry, narrow the access-to-justice gap, and foster innovation that positively impacts individuals and communities affected by the justice system. The deadline for applications is fast approaching, offering entrepreneurs a unique opportunity to be part of this transformative initiative.